



Centers' message: Choose life

Faith-based pregnancy centers are part of the battle over the state's role in the abortion issue.

BY JUSTINE GRIFFIN
Times Staff Writer

Annie Filkowski used to see the signs during her drive to school each morning. "Free pregnancy tests," they said.

So when she feared she might be pregnant at 16, shortly after starting to have sex with her boyfriend, she remembered them. And walked into a center in Fort Myers.

Keisha Walters, saw the signs too, outside an old Tampa home on Armenia Avenue that had been converted into an office. Walters, 32, was pregnant for the first time and had lost her job. She felt alone, far away from her family in the Caribbean island of Saint Kitts.

"I didn't even know what to ask for, or what I needed," she said.

Both women had found their way to one of the 105 publicly subsidized "pregnancy support centers" in Florida, part of a network of mostly faith-based organizations that provide emotional support and limited medical services for unplanned pregnancies — while also working to prevent abortions.

But their experiences could not have been more different. Filkowski said she left feeling pressured and duped, while Walters found a welcoming source of help that she continues to rely on today.

The contrast goes to the heart of a simmering
» See PREGNANCY, 15A



OCTAVIO JONES | Times

Sheila Cunningham's son, Curtis Cunningham Jr., 33, was one of people killed in Tampa in 2017. His murder is unsolved.

Tampa's grim toll in 2017: 39 homicides

It's the most in 15 years; officials say the reasons are complex.

BY TONY MARRERO
Times Staff Writer

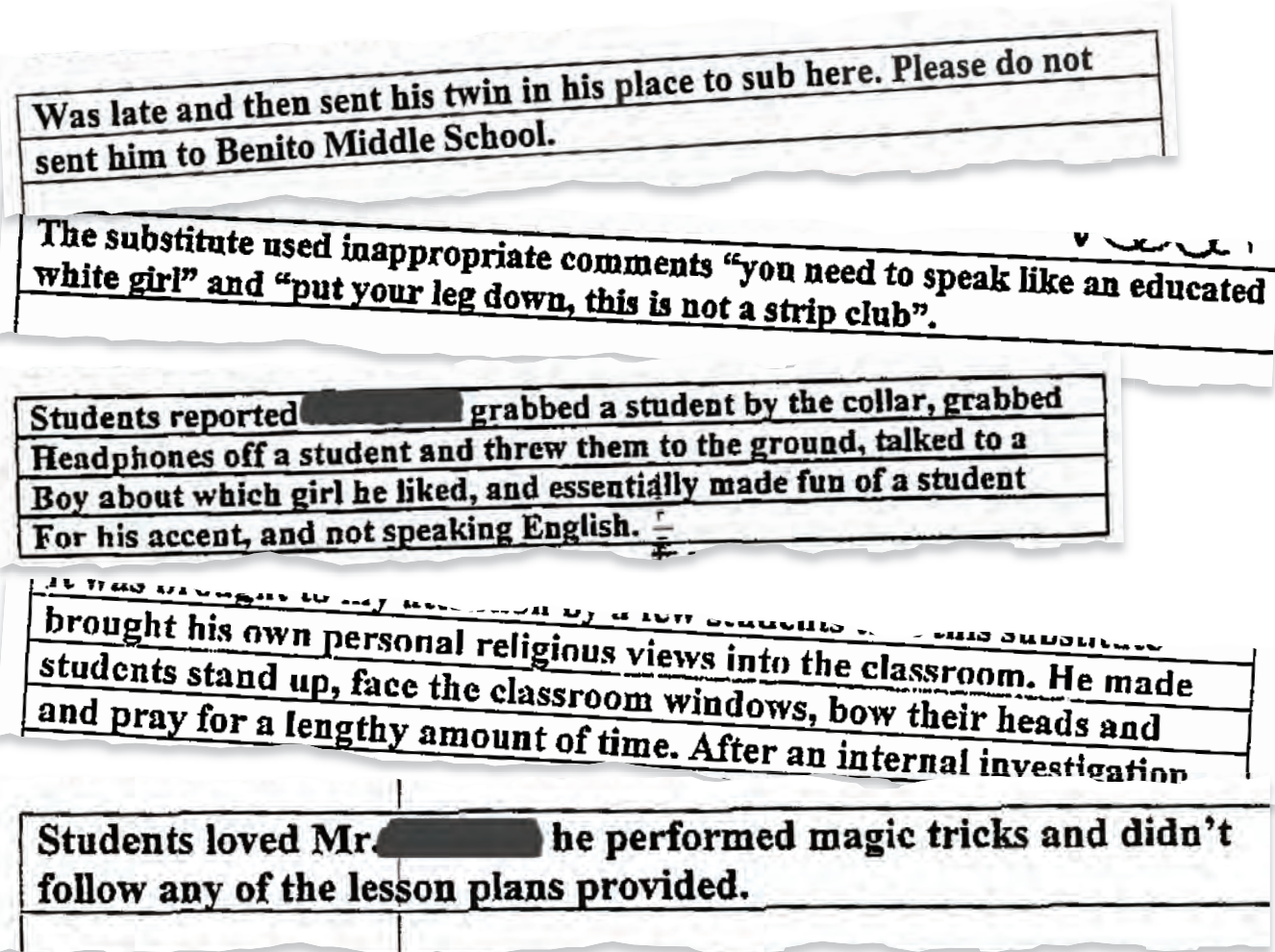
TAMPA — Sheila Cunningham had just arrived home from work when her ex-husband called from Illinois with bad news about their oldest son, Curtis Jr.

"He said Junior's been hurt," Cunningham recalled. "I said okay, where's he at, I'll go to the hospital, and he said no you can't. I said what do you mean I can't, and he said he's been shot."

Then Cunningham realized what he had been trying to say, that her 33-year-old son Curtis was already gone, fatally shot during an early morning altercation with several teens outside a home in Tampa Heights.

Whoever pulled the trigger helped push the city of Tampa toward a grim statistic: 39 people were slain in 2017, the most in nearly 15 years, and 27 of them were African-Americans.

The list includes the Seminole Heights murders last fall that left four people dead, and the two roommates police say were killed in New Tampa by a self-described former neo-Nazi for
» See KILLINGS, 10A



Poor substitutes

A firm that hires substitute teachers for Hillsborough schools has sent staffers who are ill-prepared, inappropriate, or worse.

BY MARLENE SOKOL
Times Staff Writer

Kenneth Spain told his students at Chamberlain High School that he overcame a pornography addiction when he found Jesus.

Pornography and Jesus are both taboo topics for public school teachers, so this became a case for the Hillsborough County School District's professional standards office.

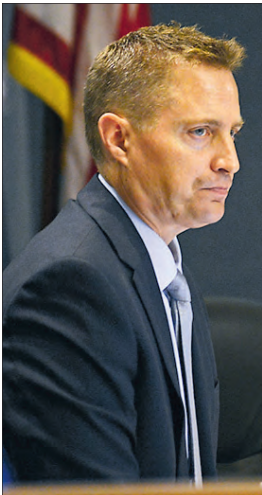
Spain resigned. He asked if he could return as a substitute. A letter in his file said not just yet.

But Kelly Educational Staffing hired him anyway and sent him to work at Greco Middle School.

Kelly — contracted by the district since 2014 — fills more than 170,000 shifts each year when teachers are absent or on leave.

Its ranks include hundreds of former Hillsborough teachers. While some are retirees, others were fired or resigned amid allegations of wrongdoing, a principal's low opinion of their teaching abilities or because they lacked proper certification.

A Tampa Bay Times investigation found reports of substitute teachers sleeping on the job, calling children "idiots" and "retarded," making sex-



"I don't have a lot of patience for people who, with our kids, conduct themselves unprofessionally,"

Jeff Eakins, superintendent of the Hillsborough County School District

ually suggestive comments and lashing out against school staff — sometimes even stealing from them.

Children in the lowest-income schools are the most likely to spend their days with substitutes. These include the seven "Elevate" schools that superintendent Jeff Eakins designated two years ago to receive the best resources the district had to offer.

Officials from Kelly and the district said the problems cited by the *Times* are aberrations. They said the vast majority of substitutes do a good job and the arrangement, which costs about \$13 million a year, has improved a long-time struggle to fill vacancies. They said the relationship is evolving and improving over time.

But the superintendent acknowledged gaps in the process, which became less transparent when the task was outsourced.

On Dec. 20, he sent a letter to Kelly asking about employee discipline and for more information on the substitutes brought to his attention by the *Times*. If company officials fail to respond, he will consider them in violation of their contract.

"I don't have a lot of patience for people who, with our kids, conduct themselves unprofessionally," Eakins told a reporter.

» See SUBSTITUTES, 12A

BY THE NUMBERS

- 7,000** | Number of schools, in 35 states, that hire substitute teachers through Kelly Educational Staffing
- 2014** | When Kelly started working with the Hillsborough County School District
- NEARLY 8,000** | Hillsborough applicants who have signed on with Kelly
- ABOUT 2,500** | Number of substitutes active in Hillsborough
- \$13 MILLION** | Annual cost to Hillsborough school system
- \$10.75 TO \$15** | Hourly wages for a substitute, depending on education, as billed to the school district
- 33** | Percent markup Kelly takes, so substitutes take home between \$8 and \$11.25
- 20** | Percentage of shifts filled by substitutes with five-year Florida teaching certificates
- 37** | Percentage of shifts covering classroom vacancies

Sources: School Board agenda documents, Kelly Services.

IN SPORTS

Postseason path

The Bucs can look at the teams that made it to the playoffs to see their numerous needs on both sides of the ball. **1C**

IN LATITUDES

Explore, enjoy

A solo trip to Barcelona is buoyed by Airbnb Experiences — local-guided activities with new friends. **6L**

IN LOCAL

'Old life is gone'

The \$450 million Mega Millions jackpot winner has important security and financial decisions to make, his lawyer says. **1B**

IN BUSINESS

Only in Florida

The Sunshine State is certainly different: Five ways our consumer laws break from the rest of the country. **1D**

TODAY'S WEATHER

Chilly

8 a.m.	Noon	4 p.m.	8 p.m.
38°	54°	59°	52°

0% chance of rain
More, back page of Sports

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False missile alert panics Hawaii

State officials blame human error for "totally inexcusable" mistake.

New York Times

An early-morning emergency alert mistakenly warning of an incoming ballistic missile attack was dispatched to cellphones across Hawaii on Saturday, setting off widespread panic in a state that was already on edge because of escalating tensions between the United States and North Korea.

The alert, sent by the Hawaii Emergency Management

Agency, was revoked nearly 40 minutes after it was issued, prompting confusion over why it was released — and why it took so long to rescind. State officials and residents of a normally tranquil part of the Pacific, as well as tourists swept up in the panic, immediately expressed outrage.

"The public must have confidence in our emergency alert system," Gov. David Y. Ige said. "I am working to get to the bottom

of this so we can prevent an error of this type in the future."

Officials said the alert was the result of human error and not the work of hackers or a foreign government. The mistake occurred during a shift-change drill that takes place three times a day at the emergency command post, according to Richard Rapoza, a spokesman for the agency.

"Someone clicked the wrong
» See ALERT, 4A